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My Sense is a statement of arts and letters dedicated to all things we as artists strive for, a chance to allow our voices to be heard. This is a collaboration of graphic artists, painters, poets, potters, and photographers. We have one thing to say to you, *Enjoy.*

Electric Light Deity

The striking electric light strobes saturate
His believers—parasitical sponges
seeing only red, blue and green.
They give their tithe,
devoted and faithful to the electric light deity.
This god that sits in the center
summons the sea of souls to gather around.
Attending mass in half-hour increments
they giving their life to the divine light.
Baptized into the life of flipping through
the waves of electric light religion,
channeling their souls to the screen,
connected to a cable wire
that passes through the brain.

Cliff Burgess



Stacey Adams
acrylic

Retail Management

I spent my summer working in a store
among the fat, overripe adolescents
to help them find discs they won't buy,
to clear the carnage of carelessly dropped discs
and the occasional empty, plastic shells left in their wake.

Call security again.

My clothing too heavy and horridly ugly, a penalty
I earn for knowing the dull art
of retail management; and as I stand among them,
lifting the discs to be scanned, my thoughts float beyond
my monotonous task of scan, open, organize –
to my life where nothing is so simple,
after all – life does not come with a packing slip.

Confrontation comes in clusters
like too much product, in one shipment lumped;
which I cut, tear open, and sort well.

Another email comes in,
more projects to complete,
more papers to file;
and lusty teens to watch as I do it all
in the droning, cluttered, yet efficient manner
of my retail management all through the summer.

Jess Sopolosky

Away's Watching

I have a television that fills up my studio apartment
as an unwanted guest would;
The set is in the center of my place,
like the pupil in the center of the eye,
my box is brave, emotionless
as a shogun warrior has to be
RCA explains when, where, why, and how it happened,
Just like a do-it-yourself kit,
when I want some quiet time it obeys me
like a trained golden retriever would, after it has been
broken in. my TV is energetic; it sees different actions
everyday
as a commercial pilot sees different cities during his
flights
unlike my girlfriend who ask if she looks fat,
it does not care about its obesity
staying up late at night
to watch Emerils' cooking show
my television is always there to help me sleep
just like the my pillow

Antoine Robinson



The Jilted Comforter

The marble holds the running steam
Her weakened eyes fade to the floor
I feel the warmth and I want more
My lonely day she will redeem
This lovely woman, I esteem
To keep her close I'd start a war
Tonight she lies without a snore
But more than ever she will dream
And here, I am all she will need
But to me she will never cling
My embrace can only concede
Her departure is like a sting
My sorrow continues to breed
For I am just fabric and string.

Rebecca Shaw



Amanda Lyle
digital photograph

Behind the Church

Among piles of sand used to fill the graves
a towering magnolia stood.

It was hollow on the inside; its leaves
draped over a crinoline of branches.

On days when my father stood behind the
oak pulpit, delivering eulogies
I hid under the magnolia, among
the smooth, waxy leaves and heavy blossoms.

I played in the dust, stirring it with a
small finger until clouds of grit choked me—
the sand used to fill the yawning holes that
lay waiting, always waiting, behind me.

I scattered the thick white blossoms until
the heady fragrance rested on my tongue;
until it chased away the taste of death,
on days I hid under a magnolia.

Sarah Swofford

1984-2005

Beneath the soil you stand upon,
I lie here to rot and watch the world go by.
Perhaps I am bored;
I never liked to remain still.
Life was like a tiny prison.
In death I've found freedom.
My sadistic humor, my lack of faith,
my anti-conformist spirit is welcome here.
Perhaps I'll push out of my eternal cradle,
and reach up to you who visits my grave,
to grab your ankle quickly- then release, retreat-
I will listen with the pleasure I never found in life,
as you scream with horror.
I will cackle in the same deathly tone I suppressed in life,
and you will jump away;
wondering what is that ghastly sound beneath the stone-
never to stand upon a grave again.

Jess Sopolosky

Who Watches us, I, Pt. Tenight?

Nearby a wren cries out, "Mother."
The wind pulls trees toward each other.
An August rain invades my sight,
and auburn leaves curl, taking flight.
Raking them? I never bother.
I pray for spring buds, dear Father,
—and guide my soul to do what's Right.

That last line was an afterthought.
My prayer is incomplete at best,
when all life's wars have not been fought.
I should not sit alone at rest.
These scattered leaves will turn and rot,
while all I do is sit and jest.

Amber Dumas

.Mermaid.

The salty air permeates my lungs
as I step carefully onto the huge, slippery rock.
Now caught in a position of contrapposto,
I shift my full weight forward –
landing both feet on the ocean-drenched boulder.

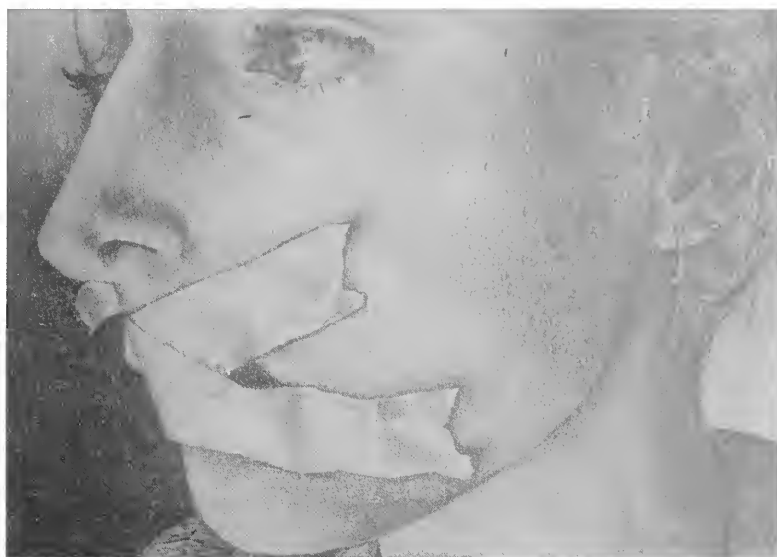
The sun's vibrant rays caress my arms and legs
with long, luminescent fingers –
leaving a slight impression of golden fingerprints.
The choppy, green water foams and churns beneath me,
– lapping at my moistened feet.

Gazing down, I see my reflection dancing
on the water's surface,
and the brightly bejeweled fish dancing beneath it.
Longing to join them, I inhale deeply,
preparing to plunge into the liquid crystal.

But, at that moment, I find myself floating backwards.
The sun's rays are replaced by the
obnoxious intensity of overhead lighting,
and the tantalizing waters that would have enveloped me
are now enveloped by a gaudy, gold frame.

Chris Bradley





Savannah Springer
graphite

Survival

In a dark part of the city,
Where people sleep on cardboard beds,
Survival takes on a new meaning; it means
Getting through a brutal winter
Without catching pneumonia.

They roam the streets looking to dig up
Their next meal like an archaeologist.
People with malnourished bodies
Expose their ribs through their skin, like
An x-ray. Their discovery means new life.

Forgotten by an entire world, they
Live to see if a new day will bring a
Second chance in a part of the city
Where the only light comes from the hopes
And smiles of those who make it another day.

Jeffery Watson



Nicole Tyson
oil



David Slone
oil

Chasing Poetry

The tip of my pencil
in its yellow uniform
poses for a moment
on a half-sheet of paper,
marooning my thoughts,
confining them to two narrow edges
before they flee my grasp.
They're fleeting at best,
trying to elude the graphite
that pins them down
like prisoners held
to the ground by stronger hands.
No barbed wire here,
no razor fence,
but with minds of their own
they ignore a call to attention
and slip over the edge
before I can catch a hand.

Margaret B. Hayes

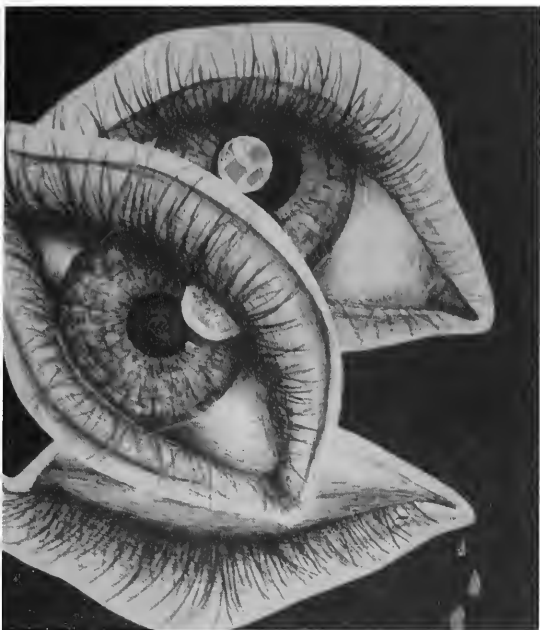


Nikki Fillion
ceramics

Afternoon At The Lake

I sit on the dock in late August
breathing in thick, humid, sweet summer air
dipping my feet slowly in the lake
warm like my bath, dead water
my murky green reflection stares
back at me; and as my feet stand weighted
on the rotting wood, the sharpest splinter
pierces through my thick flesh
as words sometimes do, certain broken words
like failure and commitment,
shattered, mangled oak,
which cuts deep, hits the bone, and stings
in the fresh, bittersweet, heart-break
of the lake in late August.

Jamie Ball



Kelly Shaw
pen drawing

John Smith

I was just your average man—2.5 kids, a pretty wife,
a house in the best suburb of New York.
Each lawn spread out like patches of the same green quilt,
no blade of grass longer than its neighbors,
each house a carbon copy of the others.

I worked on computers, and
thanks to constantly crashing servers
I spent a lot of time gone on business.

Milkawee called again,
they need me right away, I told my wife.
She kissed me and told me to hurry home.

I assured her I would.

The plane touched down, I retrieved my car
from overnight parking, and started for the house.

In the best suburb of another city,
I parked my car and greeted my wife with a kiss.
I was, after all, just your average man.

Sarah Swofford

Telling Short

Don't pretend that these are tender moments.

I told you that there would always be days
like this where we swear under our breath.

There are things neither will comprehend
about the other, locked into the cruel

vault of consciousness. As the orange flame
of your pining cigar whittles to ashes against
the coolness of the sky, I don't tell myself

that I know what thoughts or feelings
embrace you like a mistress. I tell myself
that some jealousies are better than others,
the one that wants you to come back to me.

Then your head crested with curls roiling

like the restless sea turns, your cheek
brighter somehow, the kind folds at the edges
of your eyes speak softly. Come let us talk
like vagrants, they say, our words the only
necessity that will leave us never satisfied.

Maghan Lusk



Rebecca Shaw
acrylic



Kristy Eppolito
digital photograph

Summer

No inspiration, only lack of sleep-
Am I to be creative in this state?
This asks too much, this simple form mandate.
My friend, do not expect a theme too deep.
I struggle, merely blending rhyme and feet.
My sonnet, lacking; time to face my fate.
I find no hope. Abandonment is late.
I'll try to be unique before I sleep.

I fail again, again. I must give up.
I suffer — all creative notions gone.
I am not sure I can get through this muck.
Oh look — line twelve. Hooray! I'm almost done!
I've only gotten through by sweat and luck.
Petrarch — he had a weird idea of fun.

Maghan Lusk

The Farm Bride's Covenant

Wheat is sleeping underground, yet I vow
that it will ripen in our eyes so long
as this path goes unforked. I know no wrong
in dirt-caked palms, the kneading of your brow
like fresh tilled rows, the soil, turned over now,
your sickle spine, the mockingbird's love song
in your kind, upturned mouth. I've walked along
befriending fresh horses, a polished plow,
a double harness wanting use, and must
place in thirsty earth my unfounded fears
to wait for the blooming heads of hope. Dust
reapers, clouds, soothsayers in oil-black tiers
darken the ground. Be rain, I will not rust.
I have lain fallow all these winter years.

Maghan Lusk



Bonnie West
mixed media



Emory Cash
acrylic



Heather Dowell
mixed media

This Place I Know

This place I know,
so thick with trees
one wonders if they,
like friends after a binge,
hold each other up.
So close are the fabric's threads,
one could weave a net,
if wool in hand were wound
from tree to tree.
It would soon a covering be,
but not for catching things.
This place stretches free.
No human foot, not even mine,
disturbs this sanctuary
for little things
no one ever sees.

Margaret B. Hayes



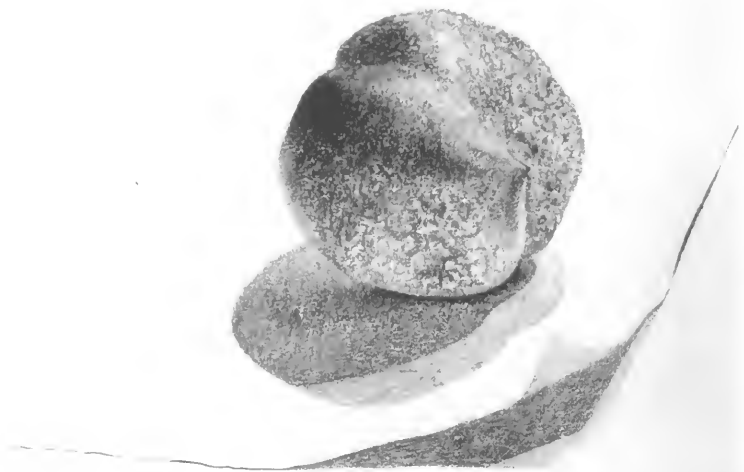
Dianna Morrow
oil

Baggage

I have packed my bags and closed them tight,
Leaving the heaviest of burdens deep in my dark suitcase.
Only a few more long and wearing miles until peace and serenity.
Leave your beaten, old suitcase at the door,
Like muddy wellies after an April shower.
Take off the anchor that has been tied around your ankle,
Like a ball and chain weighing down a prisoner.
Walk down to the ocean, light as a feather,
Feet on the sand, heart in the clouds.
Leave your worries at the door.

And for at least a while, you will escape the real world
And all the baggage that it brings with it.
At the end of it all, you will do it again,
Filling your deep hole with endless issues and such.
Closing it tightly, and off I will go back to reality,
A crowded bubble full of confused faces awaiting failure.
Tying this anchor around my ankle once again,
I slowly, but surely, make my way back home.
The black suitcase, full of clothes from a weekend spent at the beach,
Feels of nothing but dead weight, as heavy as a bucket of wet sand.

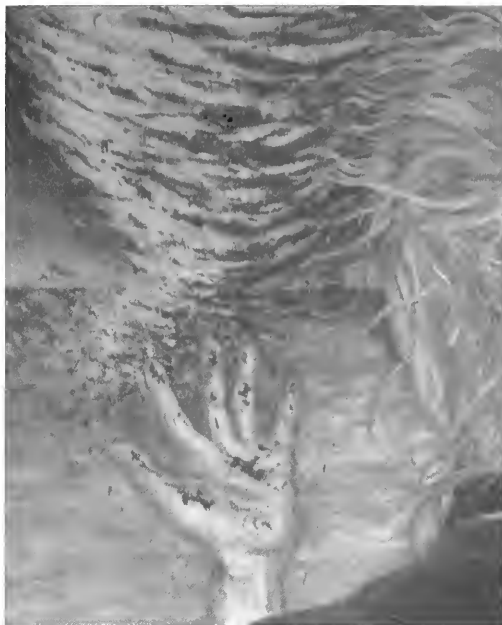
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Beth Ann Johnson
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